of the novels. To the Westerner one of the great values of Chinese fiction is the insight which much of it gives into the folklore and *mores* of the days of its composition.

SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

One of the interesting characteristics of the older Chinese culture is the rudimentary nature of most of the knowledge which was accumulated in the field of mathematics and the natural sciences. The hypothetical visitor from Mars might well have expected the Industrial Revolution and the modern scientific approach to have made their first appearance in China rather than the Occident. The Chinese have directed so much of their energy toward attaining this-worldly ends, are so industrious, and have shown such ingenuity in invention and by empirical processes have forestalled the West in arriving at so much useful agricultural and medical lore that they, rather than the nations of the West, might have been looked to as the forerunners and leaders in what is termed the scientific approach toward the understanding and mastery of man's natural environment. It is little short of amazing that a people who pioneered in the invention of papei printing, gunpowder, and the compass—to speak only of some of their best known innovations:—did not also take precedence in devising the power loom, the steam engine, and the other revolutionary machines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

The reason for the failure to achieve this priority must be in large measure a matter of conjecture. It may have been because under the Confucian state with its system of education and its civil service examinations the best of the trained minds were absorbed in government, ethics, history, and *belles-lettres.* It may

have been that China f ailea to develop a system of logic the equal of that which Western Europe owes to the Greek mind. The cause may need to be sought in obscure and debatable climatic factors or in biological and racial inheritance. It is conceivable that it can be discovered in differences of religious background.

One suggestion has it that the Chinese are practical and that science is first of all theoretical—as in Copernicus and Newton. One thoughtful modern Chinese attributes it to the fact that, under the influence of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, especially as seen in the Sung philosophers, Chinese thinkers de-